



# SEAT PLEASANT NEWS

MAY/JUNE EDITION Visit us on the web at: [www.seatpleasantmd.gov](http://www.seatpleasantmd.gov)

## ALSO INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Mayor's Message</i>	1
<i>Semi-Annual Property Tax Payment</i>	4
<i>Seat Pleasant Police Personnel Receive Recognition</i>	6
<i>City Wide Cleanup</i>	7

## City of Seat Pleasant

### Mayor

Eugene W. Grant

### Council President

Latasha Gatling

(At Large Councilmember)

### Ward I Councilmember

Elenora Simms

### Ward II Councilmember

Aretha Stephenson

### Ward III Councilmember

Reveral Yeargin

### Ward IV Councilmember

Gerald Raynor

### Ward V Councilmember

Darrell Hardy

### AT Large Council member

Kelly Porter

### Acting City Administrator

#### Treasurer

Robert L. Ashton

#### Chief of Police

Samuel Prue

### Director of Public Works

Johnny Thompson

#### City Clerk

Dashaun Lanham



## MAYOR'S MESSAGE:

When I was growing up I would often hear, from religious folk, the English proverb, "an idle mind is the devil's workshop." No, it is not an actual biblical scripture, but its roots stem from the scripture found in I Timothy 5:13 "And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle, but tattlers also busybodies, speaking things which they ought not."

In essence, I was being taught that being idle meant that you were not focused nor had no goals and thus you could be easily distracted with evil and negative thoughts. Usually, those negative thoughts would produce negative actions resulting in severe consequences. I was cautioned against idleness.

To that end, summer is fast approaching. Children will be out of school. The streets will be filled with energetic children and older youth who will be seeking something to do, somewhere to go. We will hear the inevitable, "I'm bored" or "There's nothing to do" come across the lips of many of our youth.

Therefore as parents and good neighbors we must collectively become engaged with structuring meaningful activities for our youth during the summer months. As I ponder this thought, I can think of my own youthful years as a teenager. I too, like many of our youth today wanted to be involved in activities that were fun and rewarding. I wanted to go places, become involved in new and adventurous activities and sometimes just hang around friends and have fun.

If we don't become a part of the process of helping our youth, we will ultimately complain about our young people in the community. You will witness more loitering, littering and laziness among our youth. Yes, an idle mind will become the workshop for the devil. Idle thoughts will have a tendency to manufacture mischievous ideas to satisfy their inner cravings of creativity. These idle thoughts will lead to discontent, dissatisfaction and disdain toward adults and other authority figures.

We must guard against it. We must love our children enough to ensure we develop structured agenda for our youth. We must research, develop a plan and execute programs that foster continued learning, and leisure activity. We must find ways that our youth will be empowered, educated and entertained during the summer. We should not leave our children to their own vices lest we will regret some of the decisions their "idle" minds will produce.

I am well aware of many of the challenges some of our parents face. Summer camp is expensive, daycare is expensive, activities at the recreation center are costly, limited transportation options to many activities and the list goes on. However, throughout our lives we have been faced with challenges but that is where

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(Mayor's Message con't.)

the community comes into play. We should communicate with one another more frequently, share ideas, contacts and resources. Through good communication we can produce options that will be of some use to each other.

Therefore, I charge each of you to engage yourself in the process more. If you don't have any children lend a helping hand to a struggling parent who could use your help. You might be a parent who already reared your children, then offer tips on what you did when you coordinated activities for your children during the summer. Whatever your station is in life being open and willing to talk to someone and be of help or be open and willing to accept help from someone else. I strongly believe that if we do this we will advance our cause to become a "A City of Excellence."



## A WORD FROM THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Greetings! Once again, I come to you on behalf of the City of Seat Pleasant, City Council. As always, we are working hard to improve services and the quality of life for you the residents of Seat Pleasant. There is not a moment that goes by that you are not our top priority. With that, I ask that if you have any questions, comments, or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us at City Hall, (301) 336-2600.

I would like to thank ALL of you that came out to Seat Pleasant Day to enjoy the festivities. It was a success!!! It was an honor to have Delegate Carolyn J.B. Howard, Councilmember Karen Toles, and State's Attorney Angela Alsobrooks join us during the parade. Again, thank you for your support. I look forward to seeing each and every one of you next year.

As you know the City Council is in the mist of the budget process. We have received the proposed budget from the Mayor, Acting City Administrator, and City Treasurer, as well as the residents of the City. We are taking everyone's suggestions and proposals into consideration as we process the final budget for the City.

Many have asked about the City Administrator position, we are actively reviewing resumes and interviewing individuals for the position. We hope to bring someone on board soon.

In conclusion, please continue to support your community and its leaders. We look forward to seeing each one of you at our Public Meeting the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month at 7:00 pm at City Hall. Also, please do not forget to visit the City's website at [www.seatpleasantmd.gov](http://www.seatpleasantmd.gov). There is a vast amount of information on the site that can benefit you, but also, answer many of the questions that you may have. Again, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

*LaTasha C. Gatling*

Council President

City of Seat Pleasant

"A City of Excellence"



## OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

There was no legislation passed in April.



## A WORD FROM COUNCILWOMAN ELENORA SIMMS

The Social Security Administration office at 337 Brightseat Road in Landover has closed. Residents served by that location must now go to the Social Security Administration offices in either Suitland or Seabrook. Those who live in the following ZIP codes are now being served by the office in Seabrook, Maryland at 7401 C Forbes Boulevard:

20716, 20717, 20721, 20731 and 20791

Office hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays through Fridays.

Residents who live in ZIP codes 20722, 20743, 20747, 20753, 20774, 20775, 20785 and 20792 are being served by the office at 6110 Allentown Road in Suitland.

Office hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays through Fridays.

Social Security business may also be conducted by calling 1-800-772-1213.

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## A WORD FROM COUNCILWOMAN ARETHA STEPHENSON

On Saturday, June 18th, a Document Shredding Event will be held in Seat Pleasant at the Seat Pleasant Elementary School located at 6411 G Street from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. (See flyer on the back of this newsletter) Documents are shredded in order to reduce Identity theft. Identity Theft is a serious crime. It occurs when your personal information is stolen and used without your knowledge to commit fraud or other crimes. Identity Theft can cost you time and money. It can also destroy your credit and ruin your good name. Document shredding events offer residents a secure avenue to have their sensitive and confidential documents destroyed and recycled. This event will be free for all Seat Pleasant residents and open to all County residents and citizens. The event will be held rain or shine with no alternative dates.



A licensed contractor, First Secure Shred will be collecting and shredding the documents. Residents may bring a maximum of five tall kitchen bags or five archive boxes filled with documents to be shredded. No documents that have been already shredded will be accepted. No Plastic Binders will be accepted. No Plastic bags can be shredded. No regular household trash can be shredded. No electronics can be shredded.

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## CITY HOSTS ANNUAL SEAT PLEASANT DAY



On Saturday, May 7, the City hosted its annual Seat Pleasant Day at Goodwin Park. The day began with an opening ceremony at City Hall followed by a parade that included State, County and Local officials. There were vendors and activities for all ages as well as a DJ and live performances. There was even a petting zoo and pony rides. The University of Maryland also held its annual health fair to educate residents regarding health issues.

The weather cooperated by providing plenty of sunshine but no humidity. Participants were free to enjoy the festivities with their family and friends.

The Mayor and Council would like to thank all those who contributed to the success of this event.

## SEMIANNUAL PROPERTY TAX PAYMENT

BY ROBERT L. ASHTON CITY TREASURER

As of July 2000, the taxes for you primary residence can be paid in two installments: one by September 30 and one by December 31, you still have the ability to elect a one-payment schedule.

- **Why was the law changed in 2000?**

To reduce costs for homebuyers. By moving to a two payment property tax system, persons buying homes will pay less property tax at settlement.

- **Will I receive a big tax refund if I elect to pay my property tax semi-annually?**

If you have a mortgage, your lender typically pays your property taxes annually from your escrow account. Part of your monthly payment to your lender, or escrow agent, includes an amount equal to one-twelfth of your annual property tax bill. By switching from one to two payments, you will create a one-time surplus in your escrow account that must be returned to you. Technically, this is not a tax refund, but a refund of surplus funds in your escrow account.

- **What must I do to obtain my refund?**

Nothing. Your escrow agent annually calculates the amount needed to pay property taxes, insurance, and other charges for the next year for your property. Each year you receive a copy of that escrow analysis. If there is a surplus in your escrow account, the escrow agent will send you a check for that amount. The timing of the escrow analysis and the resulting payment of any surplus amounts varies by lender, but is frequently done after the end of the calendar year.

- **Will it cost me money?**

Under the two-payment plan, the local governments may add a service fee of up to 1.65% of the second payment to your tax bill. This amount is to compensate the local government for lost interest and additional administrative expenses of sending two tax bills. This fee will be added to the second payment.

- **How much money will I get back?**

You can get a rough idea of the amount of surplus escrow funds that will be rebated as follows:

1. Look at your last tax bill, and find the amount for your property taxes only. Do not include additional fees that may be on your tax bill such as front-foot assessments, trash collection, or other taxes not based on the assessment on your home.
2. Divide that amount by 12. This is roughly what you pay in property taxes each month to your lender.
3. Find your county in the list below to get the multiplier:

County	Multiplier
Allegany, Baltimore City, Baltimore, Carroll, Cecil, Garrett, Harford, Howard, Talbot, Washington, Worcester	5
Wicomico	4
Anne Arundel, Calvert, Caroline, Charles, Dorchester, Kent, Montgomery, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Somerset	3
Frederick	N/A

4. Multiply your monthly property tax amount by the multiplier shown in the box above to get an estimate of the amount of your refund.

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(Semiannual Tax Payment continued)

- **Why does the refund differ in different counties?**

Tax payments are generally made by lenders at the latest date possible. Some counties offer a discount for paying the tax bill before September 30. If a county offers this discount federal law requires your escrow agent to take advantage of it because it saves you money. Since everyone's second payment will be due by December 31, and the first payments are made at different times, there is a difference in the number of months between the two payments. The refund you get is based on the amount of time between the first payment and the second payment. Note: Not all the provisions of this law apply in Frederick County, for which there is a different statutory arrangement for property tax payments. Contact your lender to find out how and when your taxes will be paid and what effect any change may have on your escrow account.

- **Will I still get my early payment discount?**

Unless your county limits the discount to taxpayers paying the full amount in one payment, you will still get your early payment discount, but it will only be on the part of the payment made by the early payment deadline (usually July 31 or August 30).

- **What other factors affect my refund?**

There are other items that may be paid by your escrow agent. The most common is your homeowner's insurance premium. If your insurance premium goes up, this will reduce the surplus in your escrow account, and thus the refund you will get. Also, if your property assessment is increasing, and your local government does not reduce taxes to offset the increase, your taxes will go up, reducing your refund. Local governments that do not decrease their tax rate to offset the increase in assessments are required to publish advertisements in a local newspaper advising property owners that their taxes will be increasing. This information will also be included on your tax bill under the heading "Constant Yield Tax Rate"

- **Are other charges on my tax bill paid in two payments?**

If other fees are sent on the same bill along with your property tax, such as garbage collection, sewer and water, or other fees, they may all be due with the first half of your tax.

If you have questions about your property tax assessment or tax payments contact the City Treasurer at 301-336-2600 ext. 2236.

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## A WORD FROM CODE ENFORCEMENT

The Code Enforcement Department would like to thank all of the residents who have been keeping their properties in a clean and sanitary condition. This allows for our neighborhood to look more presentable and welcoming to people visiting and passing through.

### FOR YOUR INFORMATION...

#### **Brushes and grass**

It's that time of year to start cutting your grass and trimming your hedges. Please be mindful that your grass can not exceed 8" inches in height and that your hedges need to be no more than (3) three feet in height or encroach onto any public sidewalk or street.

**Storage of Vehicles-** Residents please make a note that there are not to be more vehicles regardless of its registration or inspection status and property ownership on which the vehicle is parked, and than there are parking spaces allowed for under applicable zoning laws.

#### **Animals-**

Keeping of certain restricted animals are prohibited. No person shall raise, keep or maintain any pigeons, live poultry, rabbits or livestock in such a way as to constitute a nuisance or in any way be menace to the public health. There shouldn't be any live chickens roaming within the city.

(Code Enforcement continued)

Also residents please remember that all dogs shall be leashed while off the premises of the owner, and at no time shall dogs be allowed to run at large throughout the city. If such an animal is found, they will be impounded and the owner may be fined.

**Tree Issues-** The City of Seat Pleasant is not responsible for any trees and or tree limbs that may fall into your property from your neighbor's property. If those issues should occur, it's the responsibility of the owner on which the tree has fallen on. You may contact your neighbor to try to help rectify the issues, or go through a mediation process, but it is not the city's responsibility to do so.

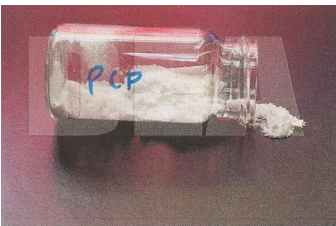
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## SEAT PLEASANT POLICE PERSONNEL RECEIVE RECOGNITION

On Thursday, April 7 at 10 a.m., two officers and one civilian employee from the Seat Pleasant Police Department were recognized for their efforts in the community by the Prince George's Municipal Chiefs Association. The ceremony was held at the Glenarden Gold Room in Glenarden, Maryland. Chaplain Earl Ivey was named "Community Policing Officer of the Year", Officer Aaron Forester was named "Officer of the Year" and Lisa Okochi was named "Civilian Employee of the Year." Congratulations to all for them for receiving such prestigious awards!

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## A WORD FROM CPAC ABOUT PCP



PCP is a highly addictive drug used by an increasing number of users in Seat Pleasant and surrounding areas. It is one of the most dangerous of hallucinogens and is sold on the streets under at least fifty different names including dippers, embalming fluid, etc. It can be ingested, smoked, or snorted and it makes people crazy! PCP can cause extraordinary strength and users may become violent and even suicidal, causing injury to themselves or others. These reactions can occur after only one dose. High doses of PCP can cause seizures, coma, and even death. And, PCP episodes or flashbacks may occur long after the drug has left the body. For our youth, moderate use can affect the hormones associated with normal growth and development.

You probably wonder what all this information has to do with you. More and more crimes are taking place by PCP users right here in our neighborhoods. We are seeing a growing number of PCP users in the county and, as a result, we're seeing a different level of crime. CPAC wants you to be informed so you'll recognize some of these dangerous symptoms and avoid potentially dangerous situations. Please be careful and aware of your surroundings.

If you have any questions for CPAC, please email us at [cpac.seatpleasant@live.com](mailto:cpac.seatpleasant@live.com). We welcome your questions, comments, and feedback!



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## **PUBLIC WORKS ANNOUNCEMENT**

The City will once again have its Annual Citywide Clean up. The Public Works Department will be available to assist each ward on the assigned date. The task that will be performed will include trash pickup, overgrown lots will be cut, vacant buildings will be boarded up and old abandoned vehicles will be removed. The schedule for the Clean up is as follows:

Ward I and Ward II June 4, 2011  
Ward III and Ward IV June 11, 2011  
Ward V June 18, 2011

The Public Works Department was also soon begin work on street repairs and resurfacing due to funding from the County's Community Development Block Grant program. The Foote Street Alley will also be included in these repairs.

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## **SEAT PLEASANT /UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND HEALTH PARTNERSHIP HEALTH REPORT**

By Sarah Koteen Undergraduate Student School of Public Health, University of Maryland

### **THE BENEFITS OF EXERCISE**

The warm spring weather is here and that means it is a great time to get outside and enjoy the sun, fresh air, fun outdoor activities and exercise. Many people who may not like to exercise enjoy it much more if they are outside exercising with friends in the spring time! Right now is a great time to get outside and "jump start" your health. African Americans are at greater risk for heart disease, diabetes and stroke (Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities, 2010), and one of the best things we can do to decrease our risk of these diseases is exercise. Another great benefit of exercising is that it helps with weight control—in the U.S. almost 60% of African Americans are overweight and almost 22% are obese (World Health Organization, 2011). Luckily, getting just 30 minutes of physical activity at least five days a week is enough to reduce your risk of developing these chronic diseases (2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2008). In the spring time, it is easy to get this amount of physical activity by taking a walk after dinner, gardening, or mowing the lawn.

Don't forget to have your kids join you and encourage them to get outside and play! Obese children have an 80% chance of becoming obese adults (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011). Activities like basketball, football, biking, and jump roping are fun and great for physical fitness. Getting outside and being physically active is much healthier than watching TV or playing computer games for hours. Exercising also helps reduce stress and just makes you feel better, both physically and mentally!

### **SEAT PLEASANT UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND HEALTH FAIR HELD DURING SEAT PLEASANT DAY**

During the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Seat Pleasant Day Health Fair Saturday May 7<sup>th</sup> at Goodwin Park, students from the University of Maryland School of Public Health held a health fair. It was planned by the students and board members from the Seat Pleasant/University of Maryland Health Partnership (SP-UMHP). At the health fair the students help to educate residents about high blood pressure, diabetes, cancer, joint disease, Alzheimer's disease, obesity, respiratory disease, dehydration, kidney disease, flu, and sexual health. Free screenings were also offered, including blood pressure, blood glucose, bone density, body fat and HIV/AIDS. For any questions, kindly contact us at [sphf2011@gmail.com](mailto:sphf2011@gmail.com). By Sarah Koteen Undergraduate Student School of Public Health, University of Maryland

City of Seat Pleasant

*"A City of Excellence"*

6301 Addison Road

Seat Pleasant, Maryland 20743



PRESORTED  
FIRST CLASS  
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## WALK TO EXCELLENCE

*Seat  
Community  
Group*

Taking Steps for our Health

*Pleasant  
Walking*

### FAMILY KICK-OFF event!

FREE & OPEN TO EVERYONE!

DATE: SATURDAY, MAY 21ST

TIME: 10:00AM

START LOCATION: GOODWIN PARK  
311 68TH PLACE, SEAT PLEASANT, MD

ALL SPEEDS & EXPERIENCES WELCOME!

UNITE WITH COMMUNITY & IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH!

WEAR YOUR WALKING SHOES!

CHANCE TO WIN LOCAL BUSINESS GIFT CARDS!

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: COUNCILWOMAN  
ARETHA STEPHENSON AT (240) 601-1037



The City of Seat Pleasant

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in partnership with  
the Department of Environmental Services is hosting a free

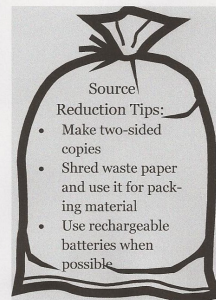
## Document Shredding Event



Saturday  
June 18, 2011  
8 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.



Seat Pleasant Elementary School  
6411 G Street  
Seat Pleasant, Maryland 20743



#### Source Reduction Tips:

- Make two-sided copies
- Shred waste paper and use it for packing material
- Use rechargeable batteries when possible

All residents are invited to this free Document Shredding Event.

Residents may safely dispose of their confidential documents by bringing a maximum of 5 tall kitchen bags or five archive boxes filled with documents to be shredded by mobile trucks from First Secure Shred, Inc. and then recycled.

Sponsored by Councilwoman Aretha Stephenson, Ward II  
For more information call her at (240) 601-1037 or  
e-mail [Aretha.stephenson@seatpleasantmd.gov](mailto:Aretha.stephenson@seatpleasantmd.gov)